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developed in Asia Minor,⁴ and is not found in Rome before the Arch of Titus, built in 82 A. D. The Roman order has very distinct features of its own, all of which are to be found in our example. There is a double row of *akanthos* leaves below the astragal moulding of the echinus. Rising almost to the latter on each face is a pair of incurling tendrils which replace the



COLUMN, ROMAN COMPOSITE ORDER
II CENTURY A. D.

central pair of volutes in a Corinthian capital. The band joining the Ionic volutes is raised so as almost to obscure the cavetto of the abacus. In the center of each face is an *akanthos* spray from which leaf carvings grow along the band connecting the volutes, and fill the spiral volute channelings.

The column is probably Hadrianic; the decoration is almost identical with that

of the "Oecus Corinthius" of Hadrian's villa at Tivoli. The astragal with its long oval bead and sharply defined double bead, the form of the curling tendrils, the long crinkly folds of the *akanthos* leaves, are closely similar. The technique is Hadrianic; the use of the coloristic principle with its sharp contrasts of light and dark, the drill-work, and the long, inanimate grooves are faithfully produced in this and the Tivoli examples.

M. E. C.

BRONZE BELT-CLASPS AND PENDANTS FROM THE NORTH- ERN CAUCASUS¹

THE seven bronze objects recently acquired by the Metropolitan Museum, and now shown temporarily in Wing F, Room 1, belong to a well-known class of antiquities which have been and are found in great quantities in the graves of the proto-historic period in the Northern and Central Caucasus.

Four of them (cf. fig. 1, c, d, e) are belt-clasps in cast bronze. They are certainly imitations of similar clasps made originally of gold or silver. The models from which the bronze clasps of the Museum were imitated were probably gold or silver plaques of thin metal in openwork and repoussé, which were originally adorned with geometric ornaments in twisted wire and filigree work laid on the surface of the plaques. These plaques were fastened to their wooden or leathern foundation by means of bronze or iron nails with big conical tops plated with gold or silver. All four clasps in the Museum present the same ornamental scheme. In a wide square frame are included figures of animals (stags and horses) in openwork. The frames are adorned with geometric patterns: one is covered with a double twisted wire; the other three present a combination of twisted wire and of one, two, or three rows of spirals of the most primitive forms. The animals are highly stylized,

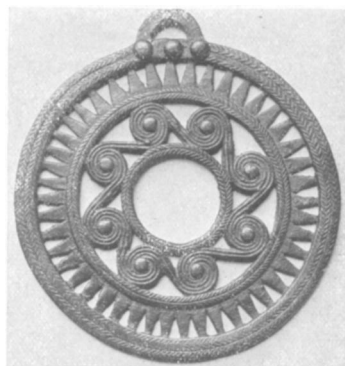
⁴S. B. Murray, Jr., *Hellenistic Architecture in Syria*, p. 20.

⁵S. B. Murray, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 21.

¹Professor Michael Rostovtzeff of the University of Wisconsin has kindly contributed the following article upon a recent purchase of the Museum.



A



B



C



D



E

FIG. 1. CAUCASIAN BELT-CLASPS AND PENDANTS
II CENTURY B. C.—III CENTURY A. D.

especially the extremities—the horns, the tails, the feet, etc.—which assume the form of geometric ornaments, mostly spirals in the well-known form of “eights” or “spectacles” (*Brillen-Spirale*). The empty spaces between the bodies of the animals and the frames are filled with figures of other animals of smaller dimensions or with geometric patterns. The plaque with the figure of a horse (fig. 1, c) shows under the belly of the horse a foal, under its head a dog, and above its back a bull with large lyre-shaped horns. The horse is bridled but not saddled. One of the two plaques with the figure of a stag shows between the feet of the stag and under its head two birds in profile, and above its back a stylized figure of a flying bird between two spirals. The other (fig. 1, d)—the most artistic and elaborate of the set—is adorned with geometric patterns only. Its frame is elaborate and elegant: note the combination of a solid frame with spiral and twisted wire patterns and of a second openwork frame of small balusters; note also the nails with small and elegant tops. The stag of this plaque is much more refined than that of the other plaque: its horns form an elegant combination of a “spectacle” and two plain spirals; its tail, legs, and hoofs are all more or less geometrized. The empty spaces between the feet and above the back are filled with spiral ornaments.

The circular plaque with the figures of four dogs running one after another and the figure of a mountain goat in the center (fig. 1, a) may have served to adorn a belt or may have belonged to a horse trapping. The circular plaque in openwork with geometric patterns (fig. 1, b) is certainly a pendant, but I do not know to what kind of “ensemble” it originally belonged. The statuette of a stag with a little chain fastened between its horns (fig. 2) is a fibula.

Specimens of belt-clasps, pendants, and fibulae almost identical with those which I have described above may be found in all the large collections of North Caucasian antiquities. See, for example, the clasp of the Hermitage found in the cemetery of Kamunta and published by Count I. Tolstoy

and N. Kondakoff,² or the clasp of the Museum of Kiev found in the cemetery of Digori and published by Chantre.³ The circular plaque with figures of animals may be compared with a similar plaque in the Hermitage which was published by Tolstoy and Kondakoff, loc. cit., p. 474, fig. 427. On the openwork circular pendants see my book, *The Iranians and the Greeks in South Russia*, Oxford, 1922, p. 57, fig. 6 and p. 227, note 11. On the Caucasian antiquities in general and especially on the pendants in the form of animals or parts of animals see the bibliography quoted in the same book on p. 225, note 5.

As regards the date and the affinities of the bronze objects acquired by the Museum, there is no general agreement among archaeologists.

Unfortunately no careful and exhaustive treatment of the subject exists in scientific literature. All the works published on the subject are either publications of material, like the valuable works of the Countess P. Uvarova⁴ or A. Ivanovsky,⁵ or general “aperçus” based on one group of monuments only, like the chapter on the Caucasian antiquities in the book of Tolstoy and Kondakoff quoted above, or the well-known article of R. Virchow on the antiquities of the Kuban.⁶ The main reason for this fact is that no careful scientific excavations were carried out in the Caucasus and that no systematic investigation of the material piled up in great masses in Moscow, Petrograd, Kiev, and especially in Tiflis, was attempted by a trained scholar.

Let me state briefly my own opinion on the subject. As far as my knowledge reaches (cf. my article, *L'âge du cuivre*

²Count I. Tolstoy and N. Kondakoff, *Antiquités de la Russie Méridionale*, p. 471, fig. 424.

³Chantre, *Recherches archéologiques au Caucase*, vol. I, p. 54, fig. 29.

⁴Countess P. Uvarova, *The Cemeteries of Northern Caucasus, Materials for the Archaeology of the Caucasus*, VIII, Moscow, 1900 (in Russian).

⁵A. Ivanovsky, In *Transcaucasia*, *ibid.*, VI, Moscow, 1911 (in Russian).

⁶R. Virchow, *Abhandlungen der Berliner Akademie*, 1895, *Phys.—Math. Kl.*, pp. 1ff.

dans le Caucase septentrional, *Revue arch.* 1920 (XII), pp. 1 ff.), we must start in our investigations on the history of civilization in the Caucasus with the Copper Age, with the rich finds of this period in the Northern Caucasus. There is a close connection between these finds and the prehistoric finds in the Southern Caucasus or Transcaucasia, although there is a gap of several centuries between the two groups. The South Caucasian antiquities belong to the Late Bronze Age, almost to the beginning of the Iron Age, i.e. to the period about 1000 B. C.; the finds of the Kuban in the Northern Caucasus are much earlier (the third millennium B. C.). Nevertheless, there are remarkable affinities between the two groups, especially as regards the animal style of ornamentation which predominates both in the North Caucasus and in Transcaucasia. The primitive animal style of the Copper Age assumed in Transcaucasia the most refined forms. A peculiar combination of geometric and animal patterns both in the various objects of metal and in the pottery came about and prevailed there for a long time. The predominant geometric patterns are almost exclusively different kinds of a primitive spiral. The most refined and elaborate examples of this ornamental style are the bronze belts of Transcaucasia and of Kuban which were investigated by Virchow and recently by B. Farmakovsky.⁷ Another peculiarity of the Transcaucasian bronzes of the Late Bronze Age is a marked predilection for the openwork technique and for the polychrome inlaid work, both in the metal objects and in the ceramics.

This peculiar civilization was replaced in Transcaucasia by the almost purely neo-Assyrian civilization of the Vannic Kingdom, which flourished in Transcaucasia during the first millennium B. C. and submerged the ancient native civilization of this region. But the old traditions have not perished; they were kept in the Central and the Northern Caucasus. The cemetery of Kuban is the best representative of

this Central Caucasian civilization of the Early Iron Age. The antiquities of this cemetery—almost exclusively bronze objects—are not so refined and elegant as the contemporaneous antiquities of the Southern Caucasus; they are more massive, exaggerated in their size; but the types of the objects and the principles of ornamentation remained the same and were jealously kept for centuries. There is no doubt that many of the graves of the Kuban and of the similar cemeteries of North Caucasus in general belong early in the first millennium B. C. But there is no doubt also that the tradition maintained itself in these places for centuries and lasted almost without change down to the period of the Greek domination on the shores of the Black Sea and to the time when North Caucasus was under the sway first of the Scythian kings (VIII–III cent. B. C.) and later of the Sarmatian tribes which settled down in the steppes of the Kuban in the III–I century B. C. and remained masters of these regions for centuries (the dominating tribe of the Sarmatians—the Alans—still dwells in one of the districts of North Caucasus under the name of the Ossetes).

No wonder that along with the typical Caucasian bronze objects we find in some graves of these cemeteries, first, Greek and Scythian things, and later on, objects which at the first glance can be recognized as peculiar to the Sarmatians. The Scythians never came in closer contact with the North Caucasian tribes. They were satisfied with a kind of political supremacy over them. Thus, there are no traces of a strong influence of the Scythian civilization on the Caucasus. On the other hand, the Sarmatians penetrated into many districts of the Caucasian mountains, mixed with the native population, and originated a new civilization which I should like to call the Sarmato-Caucasian. To this civilization, which began to develop in the late Hellenistic period, belong many cemeteries of the North and Central Caucasian regions, and especially the cemeteries of Kamunta, Kambulta, and Digori,⁸ which

⁷ B. Farmakovsky, *Materials for the Archaeology of Russia*, 34 (1914), pp. 37 ff. (in Russian).

⁸ A general characterization of these cemeteries may be found in the work of Tolstoy and Kondakoff quoted above.

yielded most of the objects which can be compared with the seven bronzes now in the Museum. The jewels and other objects found in the graves of the cemetery of Kamunta belong certainly to the class of jewels which is characteristic of the Sarmatian graves in general (see my book quoted above, ch. VI) and thus date these graves in the late Hellenistic and the early Roman Imperial period (II cent. B. C.—III cent. A. D.).

To this period belong also the bronzes purchased by the Museum. They present a curious mixture of Caucasian traditions and new motives which were brought to the Caucasus by the Sarmatians from Central Asia. A mere glance at the belt-clasps of the Caucasus shows their affinities both with the South Caucasian bronzes and with the similar belt-clasps of Western Siberia, the most peculiar products of the Sarmatian art (see E. Minns, *Scythians and Greeks*, Cambridge, 1913, pp. 271 ff.). And I should say the affinities with the

Siberian plaques are more pronounced than those with the South Caucasian bronzes. We have the same ornamental treatment of the animals, the same muscleless bodies, the same predilection for geometrization of the extremities, the same juxtaposition of different animals, etc. The circular plaque with the dogs finds its close parallels in many Sarmatian "phal-aræ" found in South Russia (see my book, pp. 136 ff.). The same must be said of the circular openwork pendant (*ibid.*, p. 233, note 15, g.). Thus, the bronzes just added to the Museum collections belong, in my opinion, to the class of the late Caucasian bronzes, which are characteristic of the cemeteries of the mixed Sarmato-Caucasian population of the Caucasus in the late Hellenistic and the Roman period. No more precise dating is possible, but I am inclined to place the bronzes of the Metropolitan Museum rather in the earlier than in the later part of this period.

M. ROSTOVITZEFF.



FIG. 2. CAUCASIAN
BRONZE FIBULA